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AUTHOR Leming, James S.
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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the effects of schooling on political socialization and presents a theoretical perspective on the learning of civic norms which will provide insight into both the limits of schools' current efforts at instilling civic norms and the potentialities of new approaches. Norms are defined as personally binding conceptions of right conduct. Civic norms refer to norms on political as well as moral and social questions. A review of research establishes two important points. First, the social studies curriculum, especially with respect to the development of political and moral attitudes, is failing to have any noticeable impact on students' acquisition of norms. Second, the teacher and classroom climate have the potential to be significant influences in the learning of civic norms. This pattern of findings indicates that the forces which influence the learning of civic norms center around the social, interpersonal interactions in schools and the resulting school climate. An interpretation of this phenomena is offered based on the legal socialization perspective of Hogan and Mills which acknowledges the social basis of civic learning. It is suggested that current approaches to civic and moral education place too much emphasis on student reasoning. The social dynamics involved in the acquisition of social norms, which involve nonrational factors, are largely absent in social studies theory and curriculum. Suggestions for curricular reform based on the Hogan and Mills framework are presented. For example, teacher education programs should sensitize prospective teachers to the attributes to which children selectively attend which result in the perception that the teacher is worthy of respect and credible. (Author/RM)

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Civic Learning, Schooling and the Dynamics of Normative Socialization

James S. Leming
Southern Illinois University
at Carbondale

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ABSTRACT

Evidence is cited which suggests that the manifest social studies curriculum, especially with respect to the development of political and moral attitudes, is failing to have any noticeable impact on students' acquisition of norms. An interpretation of this phenomena is offered based on the legal socialization perspective of Hogan and Mills. It is suggested that current approaches to civic and moral education place too much emphasis on student reasoning. The social dynamics involved in the acquisition of social norms, which involve nonrational factors, are largely absent in social studies theory and curriculum. Suggestions for curricular reform based on the Hogan and Mills framework are presented.

Civic Learning, Schooling and
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All societies, if they wish to remain decent places in which to live, protect the rights of their citizens, and provide background against which progressive and peaceful social change can take place must provide experiences for children by means of which they come to an understanding of and allegiance to the civic norms on which the day-to-day life of that society is based. Social psychologists typically refer to this process as one of socialization: those events that cause people to develop their particular (and usually favorable) orientation to the rules, values, and customs of their society. The failure of the adult generation to bring the young into a shared perspective of the larger culture would have disasterous consequences both for the youth and for the society and its adult members.

In the United States schools have traditionally been seen to play a significant role in bringing children into the larger civic culture. In the early days of our national history the cultural diversity and the concomitant need for nation building in the face of this cultural heterogenity produced great interest among the general public that schools foster a common core of moral and political values. More recently, the fragmentation of contemporary life, the increased influence of mass media, the loss of a sense of community, the weakening of the stable two-parent home, rampant narcissism, Watergate and Abscam, and other contemporary social and political trends have been seen by many segments of the population as undermining a shared sense of core civic values. In response to this perceived disintegration of shared civic values, schools have once again been called upon to "fix" societal ills and redouble the effort to bring children into a common civic culture.

The purpose of this paper is not to question whether or not schools should be involved in the business of the socialization of youth into a prescribed set of civic norms, but rather to examine how schools have been doing in this regard and present a theoretical perspective on the learning of civic norms which will provide insight into both the limits of schools' current efforts at instilling civic norms and the potentialities of new approaches. Before proceeding, however, two terms which are used throughout this paper are in need of definition. First, I will use the word norms to refer to personally binding conceptions of right conduct. That is, when I talk about the learning of certain norms, I am refering to more than simply learning to utter statements about what one's responsibilities or obligations are. I am assuming that "having norms" entails being disposed to act in "such and such" a manner. Secondly, when I talk about civic norms, I am lumping together one's norms on political as well as moral and social questions.

The Influence of Schooling on the Learning of Civic Norms

The literature on the impact of school curricula on the learning of civic norms is discouraging. Ehman (1980) in a review of the effects of schooling on political socialization notes that "The regular secondary school civics and government curriculum has no noticeable impact on the political attitudes of students...the manifest curriculum itself appears to not be an impressive vehicle for shaping political attitudes or participation orientations (p. 113)." However, this is not the entire picture on the schools influence on civic norms. Ehman also notes that "...it is impressive that the evidence from a variety of studies lines up solidly in support of classroom climate as a potent correlate of student political

attitudes (p. 110)." In other words the manifest curriculum appears not to significantly influence the formation of political norms while the latent curriculum appears to be potent in this regard.

A similar pattern of findings regarding the influence of the manifest curriculum versus the latent curriculum has been found with respect to another significant area of normative learning. Leming (1981) in a review of the research on values clarification found that out of sixteen studies in only one case was a shift in student values detected following values clarification instruction in classrooms. The other current approach to moral/values education which has attracted widespread interest and response, the cognitive-developmental approach of Lawrence Kohlberg, has generally ruled out shifts in moral norms as an attainable goal of cognitive-developmental instruction with school age children. The theory is so drawn that the focus of the educational interventions is on inducing growth in the structure of students' moral reasoning (stage) rather than content (behavioral norms or choices). Kohlberg hypothesizes that not until the higher, principled level of moral reasoning will one find a correspondence between moral reasoning and moral action. Since principled moral reasoning is largely unattainable for public school age youth, it appears that for theoretical reasons unwarranted to hold out hope that a manifest curriculum characterized by cognitive moral conflict and exposure to plus one reasoning will significantly affect the learning of moral norms. Thus, it appears that with respect to the acquisition of moral norms, current moral/values curricula stands in the same relationship to the learning of moral norms as political education curriculum does to the learning of political norms.

However, like the finding with the learning of political norms, there is evidence to suggest that classroom climate can be a significant factor

in students' acquisition of moral norms. In the classic Hartshorne and May (1930) Character Education Inquiry, which still stands as the most comprehensive and well-executed study of the effect of efforts at character education on student acquisition of moral norms, it was found that traditional approaches to character education, e.g., Boy Scouts, Sunday school, exhortation, and morally inspiring stories, have no significant impact on the normative behavior of youth. However, buried within the voluminous findings, and frequently overlooked in discussions of the study, was the finding that with respect to the incidence of deceit, classroom differences were the rule rather than the exception (pp. 324-329). It was found that these classroom differences persisted in student behavior even after a years time. These differences were not to be accounted for by differences in age, intelligence, or home background and were found regardless of the type of school (progressive or traditional). These findings suggest that a crucial factor which influences students' moral norms is the climate established in the individual classroom by the individual teacher.

More recently just community interventions in the Boston area (Power, 1980) have indicated that within the context of small democratically functioning alternative school settings one can observe and measure the evolution of collective norms regarding members expectations of each other. Power defines collective norms as "...a norm which binds members of a group qua group membership...it defines what is expected from members in their attitudes (e.g., caring about the group) and actions (e.g., not stealing from others)." Four phases have been described by means of which norms become institutionalized in a group: proposing, expecting, enforcing, and compliance. This process which has been observed in democratic school

settings involves both verbal and behavioral compliance with norms.

In this brief review of selected research and research summaries, I have attempted to establish two points. First, the manifest (as opposed to latent) curriculum does not appear to be a significant factor in the acquisition of civic (moral or political) norms. Second, the teacher and classroom climate appear to have the potential to be significant influences in the learning of civic norms. A central task for those concerned with civic education is to develop interpretations of this phenomena which adequately explain the dynamics at work and provide a guide to the evaluation and development of civic education. The remainder of this paper will present one such interpretation and offer proposals for the improvement of civic education.

The Process of Socialization to Civic Norms

The pattern of findings suggested by the above analysis of research indicates that the forces which influence the learning of civic norms center around the social/interpersonal interactions in schools and the resulting social climate. Any attempt to account for the impact of schools on normative learning should therefore focus on more basic dynamics of human experience rather than on the curriculum as commonly found in textbooks and curriculum guides. Hogan and Mills (1976) in a discussion on legal socialization present a perspective on normative learning which acknowledges the social basis of civic learning. Their perspective also can serve as a useful perspective for interpreting the above findings on civic learning. Hogan and Mills develop their perspective around the question of what social experiences and developmental processes result in an internalized orientation to the law. It is argued that any attempt to develop a valid perspective on such a central dimension

of human experience must be based on a conception of human motivation. Hogan and Mills present a picture of Man as an interaction-seeking, rule-formulating and rule-following animal. Man is held to fear isolation and unpredictability and to require routinized social activity. In other words, Man is seen as having a deep organic need for his culture. Part of what it means to be human is to have a system of law.

According to Hogan and Mills, internalized compliance with legal and social rules seem to pass through three forms or levels. The first level of development is characterized by attunement to rules. The distinguishing feature of this level of internalization has nothing to do with the rules per se. Rather, the critical transformation concerns the accommodation that a child makes to adult authority. In becoming attuned to rules, the child comes to recognize that social situations are governed by rules, learns what these rules are, and adjusts to these rules in an effortless, unambivalent way.

The second level of development is characterized by a developing sensitivity to social expectations. This level of development entails developing internalized compliance with the norms, values and principles that give rise to or justify the rules required at the first level. As Piaget (1964) has pointed out, the major vehicle at this level of development is the experience of cooperation and role taking in games. In this second level of development, children develop an internalized orientation to adult norms and values. Being required to cooperate with one's peers outside of the family, experiencing reciprocity in one's play, and perceiving that certain ideals are upheld by attractive members of the group all sensitize the child to social expectations and engender a concern for the welfare of the group. This in turn leads to a state where the ideals

and norms of one's social group are seen as one's own and one feels guilty when these norms are violated.

The final level of development from this perspective is labeled Ideological Maturity. What Hogan and Mills are concerned with at this level is autonomy, or autonomous observance of legal and social rules. An autonomous individual is held to be a person who will uphold the moral and legal ideals of his society without concern for their contemporary popularity. One's concern at this level is with acting in a manner consistent with the best traditions of one's culture rather than seeking the approval of peers. The central task of this level of development is to integrate the conflicting requirements of parents, peers, school and neighborhood. This integration is only possible through idelogical maturity which in turn is a function of having organized one's experiences and aspirations in terms of a coherent philosophy, political perspective, religion or set of family ideals. To achieve this ideological maturity children require adult models of autonomy and a historical tradition, a political philosophy or a culturally based ideology on which to draw.

To sum up, Hogan and Mills' perspective on legal socialization--internalized compliance with legal and social rules--follows directly from youths' learning to live with authority, learning to live with peers, and learning to live with social ideals. The process involved is basically one of accommodation to these developmental requirements. This perspective on legal socialization is a useful heuristic device in accounting for the role that schooling plays in the normative socialization of youth. The final section of this paper will analyze current civic education practices from the framework presented by Hogan and Mills and suggest ways that civic education can be improved.

The Learning of Civic Norms in Schools/the Legal Socialization Perspective

We have seen that the acquisition of an internalized allegiance to civic norms is to a great extent a social phenomena in which adults play a central role with respect to the presentation of authority, the judicious supervision of the peer community and the presentation (of self or others) as models of ideological maturity. It is important to note that in this view the child accommodates himself to the norms of others based on his need for social interaction, predictability and order. The process described is at its core nonrational in nature. That is, children do not seek out and conform to civic culture because somehow the development of reason requires it. Rather, children internalize civic norms because it is affectively satisfying to do so. This is not to say that children's reasoning is unimportant. Certainly, all people interpret and make sense of their environment and experiences through their powers of reason. However, this interpretation of experience follows rather than preceeds the development of commitment. There appears to be little evidence to indicate that reason plays any significant role in the/ development of social behavior (Leming, 1981).

If the above analysis is correct, then it is fair to state that civic/moral curriculum as currently interpreted rests on a mistake--the rationalist's fallacy. This view holds, incorrectly, that the correct way to develop in children a sense of civic/moral responsibility is through the development of their powers of reason. Rather, if one adopts the perspective of Hogan and Mills, the proper role for teachers and schools to play in the civic education of youth is based on nonrational, affective dynamics.

I now want to turn to an analysis of the role schooling is currently playing in the civic education of youth. In general the manifest civic and moral curriculum have failed to incorporate within their framework in an intentional manner the opportunity for the essential dynamics of legal socialization as spelled out above to work effectively. Such dynamics do operate within schools in a planned intentional manner as the classroom climate and school organization data reported above would suggest. The more common picture, however, is that schools are unaware of the forces at work inside their walls and of the resultant impact that these forces have on the socialization of youth. As presently constituted, neither teacher education programs nor social studies curricula attends to the critical role that teachers can play in the child's accommodation to adult authority. It is obvious that a too heavy handed, timid, or inconsistent presentation of adult authority can have an adverse effect on the socialization of youth. Also significant at this first level of socialization is the teacher's ability to assist children in recognizing that social situations are governed by rules, presenting these rules in a clear and attractive manner, and facilitating children's adjustment to those rules.

At the second level of development, schools also assure thier ineffectiveness with regard to that important crucible of development, the peer group. The peer group is seen as outside of, or extraneous to the goals of schooling. School days and classes are so constituted as to minimize peer interaction. Most children in junior high and high school can expect less than one hour a day within schools in which peer interaction is sanctioned. When this peer interaction is sanctioned, it is of a type which does not contribute to the key developmental task of this level. Teachers, to a large extent, seem themselves to be concerned only with academic achievement and

choose not to involve themselves with children in a way which can be formative in assisting and interpreting the child's growing sensitivity to social expectations outside of the formal classroom setting.

Finally, the view of autonomy entailed by the educational goal of detached critical judgment, which is seen as underlying all contemporary approaches to citizenship education, is not compatible with the view of autonomy essential to normative socialization. The ethos of current approaches to civic and moral education emphasizes a view of decision making in which individual decisions conform to internal rather than external rules. According to this view, one ought to be guided in one's social life by personally derived standards of right and wrong. This individualistic interpretation of autonomy is recognizable in the major approaches to moral education as well as in some of the more popular contemporary approaches to the teaching of social studies. The major weakness of this view of rational autonomy is that it presupposes a stable social order--it does not contribute to it. A culture in which the individual's education encourages one to follow one's own conscience and be suspicious of social norms can only lead to a chaotic and anomic society. According to the perspective presented in this paper, individuality, autonomy, and personal freedom are possible only by moving from the culture, not by totally rejecting it. That is, one is free and autonomous only within a cultural setting and specific social environment. For youth to be encouraged to think that their freedom and autonomy exists independent of this social nexus will lead to a stultification of individual development due to the constant frustration and rejection certain to be experienced.

Hogan and Schroeder (1980) make this point well when they state:

> ...so called freedom is not possible in a social context. Nor in fact is unallayed happiness and personal fulfillment. Social living, which is built into our bones, confers certain powerful benefits and advantages, e.g., it makes us "free from" predators, starvation, and

> loneliness. But it ensures that we are not "free" to engage in theft, reckless self aggrandezement, or recreational sex with our neighbor's spouse or children--no matter how personally fulfilling that might be (p. 7).

No matter how well rationalized one's actions might be or how autonomously we were acting when we made those choices, there are still social restraints, the restraints of culture, acting on us all. To the extent that youth, adolescents in particular, are encouraged to make such decisions in schools without a profound respect for these cultural restraints, their education is not one that is likely to contribute to either the individual or societal well-being.

Improving the Schools Role in Normative Socialization

If in fact the development of an internalized orientation to the law in children is a desirable goal for parents and teachers and if the Hogan and Mills model of legal socialization is a reasonable approximation of how this process occurs, then in what ways can children's lives in schools be arranged in order to facilitate this process? First, it must be recognized that parents and the early home environment play a much more significant and crucial role in the child's early attunement to moral and civic rules than teachers. Schools and teachers, however, do not play an insignificant role in this regard. To the extent that teachers are perceived as credible, worthy of respect, and affectively significant to children, they have the potential to play an important role in the child's early adjustment to rule-governed social life. Of course, the opposite is also possible. Currently our teacher education programs and the screening procedures used are not sensitive to the attributes described above which allow teachers to effectively serve in a positive way in the legal/social socialization process of children. There are, of course,

present within the teaching profession, teachers who spontaneously exemplify behaviors which make them effective agents in the socialization process of youth. However, we do not, in the preparation of teachers, provide training programs which sensitize prospective teachers to the attributes to which children selectively attend which result in the perception that the teacher is worthy of respect and credible and the desire to become the sort of person that they are.

A second major area in which schools can become more effective in the legal/social socialization of youth is through helping children to become aware of the functional nature of social/legal/moral norms. Too frequently in our curricula and in the rules presented by authority, the basis of these rules are unstated. The focus of our explanations to children is on the need for compliance to these rules only. The organic relationship of these rules to personal and societal well-being is all to often unstated and unexamined. The just community--democratic classroom--provides an excellent model of the process whereby, under the aegis of the teacher, children struggle with the need for rules and evolve toward voluntary compliance to said rules. Expansions of such programs are clearly desirable from the framework being advocated in this paper. The insights which children gain from these experiences also need to be transfered to an understanding of the broader societal framework. Through this experiential process of just community development, a child can come to see norms, not as alien incomprehensible obstructions, but rather as relevant to the ongoing activities and concerns of the group.

Finally, with respect to the development of ideological maturity, teachers need to serve as models of an organized coherent political and social philosophy. The fear of indoctrination and the perceived need to

remain impartial in our teaching has, on the whole, had a negative effect on the civic education of youth. To present, with conviction, a coherent political and social philosophy is not to indoctrinate; for to present one's ideas to others does not entail either insisting upon or expecting compliance. Teachers also need to present in an attractive, but not necessarily biased, manner a culturally based ideology to adolescents. This ideology, within certain obvious limitations, should have the general approval of the communities within which the children live. A central task of civic education should be to present in an attractive and comprehensible light those social ideals upon which our collective lives are based.

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